

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LA PAZ 05364 202238Z

66

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-07

PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /115 W

----- 000889

R 201520Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3972

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L 5364

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB BL

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT - LABOR RELATIONS TO RECEIVE NEW IMAGE

1. THE MINISTRY OF LABOR IS PREPARING A PROGRAM TO REDUCE APPARENT REPRESSION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT WITHOUT REDUCING EFFECTIVE CONTROL. THE ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE NEW PROGRAM INCLUDE: A) THE FREEDOM OF UNIONS TO ELECT THEIR OFFICIALS IN ACCORD WITH UNION STATUTES; B) THE SITUATION OF IMPRISONED AND EXILED LABOR LEADERS; AND C) THE REOPENING OF THE CENTRAL OBRERA BOLIVIANA (COB). WHILE THE SPADEWORK FOR REVAMPING GOB POLICY ON THESE ISSUES BEGAN SOME TIME AGO, THE DETERMINATION TO MOVE NOW IS IN PART A REFLECTION OF THE ACTIVIST STYLE OF THE NEW MINISTER OF LABOR LT. COL. MARIO VARGAS.

2. FREEDOM OF UNIONS TO ELECT THEIR OFFICIALS. THE GOB HAD USED VARIOUS DEVICES INCLUDING LEGAL INTERVENTION, RECOGNITION OF AD HOC UNION OFFICIALS IN PLACE OF ELECTED LEADERS, AND THE FREEZING OF UNION OFFICIALS IN POSITION BY SUCCESSIVE DECLARATIONS OF STATES OF SEIGE, TO DAMPEN UNION PLOTICS OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS. AS A RESULT ALMOST 70 PERCENT (MINISTRY ESTIMATE) OF UNION OFFICIALS CURRENTLY IN OFFICE ARE NOT SERVING IN ACCORD WITH THE STATUTES OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS. NOW, IN A REVERSAL OF POLICY, THE MINISTRY HAS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LA PAZ 05364 202238Z

CALLED UPON ALL UNIONS TO REGULARIZE THE STATUS OF THEIR

OFFICERS IN THE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 14 TO SEPTEMBER 14. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MINISTRY IS PLANNING MAJOR INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF CANDIDATES FAVORABLE TO THE GOB. SOURCES IN THE MINISTRY APPEAR CONFIDENT OF VICTORY IN A NUMBER OF KEY UNIONS INCLUDING AMONG THE GRAPHIC, FACTORY, CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSPORTATION WORKERS. COMMENT: WHILE THE EMBASSY HAS NO IDEA OF THE RESOURCES THE MOL WILL APPLY IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, IT WOULD SEEM THAT THE MINISTRY IS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ITS PROSPECTS.

3. IMPRISONED LABOR LEADERS WILL SOON BE RELEASED AND EXILED LABOR LEADERS WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS (JUAN LECHIN IS TO REMAIN EXILED) WILL BE PERMITTED TO RETURN. HOWEVER, LABOR LEADERS RELEASED OR PERMITTED HOME FROM EXILE WILL BE NEUTRALIZED. AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED FOR SOME TO RETIRE FROM THEIR PROFESSIONS AS WELL AS FROM UNION ACTIVITY, FOR SOME TO WITHDRAW FROM UNION ACTIVITY FOR FIXED PERIODS OF TIME, FOR SOME TO BE TRANSFERRED TO JOBS OUTSIDE OF LA PAZ AND FOR ONE TO RECEIVE A 1-YEAR SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDY IN MEXICO.

4. THE CENTRAL OBRERA BOLIVIANA (COB). THE MINISTRY'S FIRST EFFORT TO PERMIT THE REOPENING OF THE COB BUT SOMEHOW PREVENT IT FROM BECOMING A CENTER OF OPPOSITION TO THE REGIME CONSISTED IN AN INTENSIVE EFFORT LED BY MINISTER VARGAS HIMSELF TO GET UNIONS TO ACCEPT FAR REACHING REVISIONS OF THE COB'S STATUTES. THESE REVISIONS WOULD HAVE GIVEN ORGANIZATIONS FRIENDLY TO THE GOVERNMENT PREPONDERANT INFLUENCE IN THE CENTRAL. IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT KEY GROUPS SUCH AS THE MINERS, THE BANK WORKERS AND FACTORY WORKERS WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN A REMODELED COB, AND THE MINISTRY HAS ABANDONED THIS APPROACH. THE MINISTRY IS NOW PINNING ITS HOPES OF CONTROLLING THE COB ON ITS ACTIVE UNDERCOVER CAMPAIGN IN THE UNION ELECTIONS TO BE HELD THIS MONTH. IF ENOUGH PRO-GOVERNMENT CANDIDATES WERE ELECTED TO ASSURE THEIR CONTROL OF THE COB, THE MINISTRY WOULD PERMIT THE CENTRAL TO OPEN ITS DOORS. THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE FOR THE REOPENING OF THE COB UNDER THIS SCENARIO WOULD BE IN DECEMBER OF THIS YEAR. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF IT APPEARED IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP THE REGIME'S ENEMIES FROM CONTROLLING THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LA PAZ 05364 202238Z

COB, THE ORGANIZATION WOULD REMAIN CLOSED.

5. COMMENT: THE GOB IS NOT READY TO PERMIT A FREE LABOR MOVEMENT AND, IF ITS GAMBLE TO CONTROL THE MOVEMENT THROUGH SUBVERTED ELECTIONS FAILS, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL RETURN TO ITS FORMER POLICY WITH MORE DIRECT AND OBVIOUS CONTROLS.
STEDMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, LABOR RELATIONS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), LABOR OBJECTIVES, LABOR POLICY LINE, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LAPAZ05364
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740229-0941
From: LA PAZ
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740834/aaaabcrctel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOVERNMENT - LABOR RELATIONS TO RECEIVE NEW IMAGE
TAGS: ELAB, BL
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005